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# A Tour of Salem



ESSEX STREET LOOKING WEST 1826



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# HISTORIC SALEM

## Points of Interest

By HENRY W. BELKNAP

With the coming of June days the stream of summer tourists becomes noticeable in the streets of historic Salem, and once again the old town extends its perennial welcome to all those who, whether drawn by family associations or as entire strangers, come to visit her wealth of interesting sites and scenes.

Residents and natives of the city might naturally be supposed to be entirely familiar with the points a stranger would wish to see, but we are often blind to what lies daily before our eyes, and it is a common experience to meet with tourists who have vainly sought for information as to the whereabouts of our most noted spots by asking those they have met in their wanderings, and it has therefore seemed that it would be of value to take, in imagination, a tour of the town and note briefly, in passing, the more important objects.

Let us, then, leave the center of the town near the railroad station, taking Front Street and following through to Charter Street and pausing first at the

### Oldest Burial Place in Salem

—site of the "Burying Place" as early as the seventeenth century, wherein are the graves of Philip Cromwell's wife, dated 1673, Captain Richard More, a youthful passenger of the *Mayflower*, and the only known stone of one of that brave band. Beside these are the stones of Timothy Lindall, merchant, who may be called a founder of the commercial life of the place; of Nathaniel, younger brother of the celebrated Cotton Mather; Governor Bradstreet, Rev. John Higginson and those of Justices Lynde and Hathorne of the witchcraft court.

Continuing through the remainder of the short street we enter the new and broad boulevard of Hawthorne Place, nearly opposite which point, in Union Street, is the house in which Nathaniel Hawthorne was born, and turning into Derby Street we see upon our left hand the fine old Custom House in which he worked, now a monument to the days of Salem's commercial supremacy.

Derby Street was once lined with the splendid homes of the merchant princes, and these, descended from their high estate to become lodgings of our foreign-born population, are to be seen upon either hand. A few, through the saving grace of several of Salem's charitable societies, retain much of their original dignity, as for example the house of Benjamin W. Crowninshield, Representative and Secretary of the Navy under Madison and Monroe, now the Home for Aged and Destitute Women, and that of Captain Joseph Waters (about 1806), now the Bertram Home for Aged Men.

Reaching Turner Street we stop at its foot, upon the verge of Salem Harbor, and nestled among its shrubs and trees appears the far-famed

## House of Seven Gables

in which the Ingersolls, relatives of Hawthorne, lived and which is popularly considered to have been in his mind when he wrote *The Scarlet Letter*. Used now by the House of Seven Gables Association as a community center, it is securely preserved and its fittingly furnished interior well repays a visit. Tucked away at the back of the lovely garden is the "Old Bakery" so-called, built in 1683



THE TURNER-INGERSOLL HOUSE, KNOWN AS THE "HOUSE OF SEVEN GABLES"

by Benjamin Hooper and saved from destruction in the march of modern improvements by being moved here and entirely restored for use in connection with the settlement work.

From the garden we get a fine view of the harbor with picturesque Naugus Head upon the other shore, and it is not hard to imagine the sturdy hull and towering spars of one of the old India-men just returned or about to sail for the Far-East, lying peacefully in the roadstead.

Retracing our way through Turner and Essex streets we pass upon the left the Narbonne House, a fine and well-preserved specimen of a dwelling dating before 1671, and turning to the right we skirt the Common or Training Field, fronted with fine examples of early nineteenth century Colonial houses, and at the northerly end swing into Winter Street, passing at its foot a huge boulder commemorating the service of the 23rd Regiment, Volunteer Infantry, in the Civil War.

At the head of Winter Street, where Bridge Street leads to the northeast, the most direct route to Beverly and the North Shore, we turn to the left for two short blocks and enter Mall Street, narrow and tree-shaded, and midway of its length glance at No. 14, in which Hawthorne wrote

### The Snow Image and The Scarlet Letter

achieving literary fame, but associated with the distress of removal from his office in the Custom House, pecuniary troubles and the death of Madam Hawthorne, but where he lived until his own departure in 1850 for residence in Lenox.

At the westerly end of the Common and facing it is the fine house built by John Forrester, later the town residence of George Peabody and now belonging to the Salem Club; just beyond it is the East Church organized in 1718 and at that time on Essex Street, in which the celebrated Dr. William Bentley preached from 1783 to 1819. This brown-stone edifice dates from 1846.



JOHN WARD HOUSE, BUILT 1684, IN THE ESSEX INSTITUTE GARDEN

Opposite it stood, from 1805 to 1850, an imposing gate to the Common, designed by Samuel McIntire, greatest of all the architects of his period in these parts, of whose work we are to see examples as we progress.

In front of the church, standing in an angle, as Brown Street enters the square, is Kitson's heroic

### Statue of Roger Conant

the leader of Salem's first settlers, and close by the fine house built in 1818 by John Andrew, at the time it was built the most costly house in New England, the pillared colonnade on the southerly side being especially noteworthy.

Just around the corner on Essex Street, up which we now turn, is the very good example of McIntire work, the White-Pingree house, and next door, in two large brick buildings, one of Salem's two famous museums,

## The Essex Institute

Of the wealth of priceless historical objects collected here it is possible in this limited space to do little more than make a suggestion. Founded in 1848 and succeeding two previous organizations, the Essex Historical Society and the Essex County Natural History Society, there has been gathered together not only one of the finest collections of portraits by early American painters which is in existence, including examples by Trumbull, Stuart, Blackburn, Smibert, Copley, Frothingham, Osgood and many more, but also cases of costume, several type rooms of early periods, valuable collections of glass, china, furniture, jewelry, tools, implements, etc., and a library rich in genealogical, historical and biographical works, a fine library relating to maritime subjects and one devoted to books upon the Chinese Empire, together with a vast store of manuscripts, including the Sheffield Patent, dated in 1623, authorizing the settlement of the North Shore of Massachusetts by Roger Conant and his companions, who stopped first for three years upon Cape Ann and then removed to Salem.

In the museum hangs the original flag named "Old Glory" by Captain William Driver in 1831, and in its cases a large group of military uniforms and relics of various wars. One of the interesting exhibits usually to be seen is the baby's shirt worn by Governor Bradford at his christening, together with a pair of tiny mits and the silk blanket used on the same occasion, but in view of their great value as a part of the ter-centenary celebration of the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, these have been (1920) temporarily loaned to the Pilgrim Society of that place.

In the lovely garden at the rear of the museum are various bits of architecture, a large annex building to the museum and a house of 1684, furnished according to the period, and with a quaint "cent shop" and apothecary shop housed in the lean-to addition, also close by one of the small cobbler's shops of the same date, about 1830, of which many were dotted about the country until a comparatively late time, with all the tools and materials left just as they were when the workmen stopped work.

Days could be spent here if justice were to be done to all the varied sights, but we must hasten on, as only a block further stands the

## Peabody Museum

quite as compelling in its interest.

This is housed in a massive granite building, built in 1824, in which the lower floor was at first used by the Asiatic Bank, the Oriental Insurance Company and the Post Office, but of which the entire space, together with large additions in the rear, is now occupied by the Museum.

The funds furnished by George Peabody of London to found this institution in 1867 were combined with those of the East India Marine Society, founded in 1799, and the two societies were joined in one, to which was added a considerable collection of natural history owned by the Essex Institute. In 1906 Dr. Charles G. Weld added to many generous gifts a fine extension in the rear to house the superb ethnological collections which are now so fittingly displayed. An attractive lecture hall seating several hundred is in frequent demand for entertainments.





PRIVATEER GRAND TURK, ENTERING MARSEILLES, 1815

In the Marine Room, which occupies the old banking-rooms, are many fine portraits of Salem merchants and sea-captains, a varied group of models of ships and an immense collection of pictures of old-time ships.

Above in the East India Marine Hall are to be found the cases filled with the exhibits of natural history, notably a very complete one of the fauna of Essex County, while in Ethnology Hall are the ethnological collections from India, China and the Pacific Islands, together with those from Africa, North and South America and in Weld Hall the most comprehensive collection of Japanese ethnology in the world.

Here again, if exhaustive examination were made, many days would be needed, and it is safe to say that the casual visitor making a tour of the whole city will, if he is particularly interested in the subjects covered, decide to return at another time and devote himself to this alone.

Following on through Essex Street, the main thoroughfare of the city, we pass on the left and somewhat to the rear of the buildings fronting on the street,

### The Dignified Old Market House

built in 1816, upon the site of the sumptuous house built in 1799 by Elias Hasket Derby at a cost of eighty thousand dollars, in which he only lived a few months before his death, after which it was offered for sale, but no purchaser appearing for so costly an establishment it was deeded to the city and later taken down and the market house erected. It is greatly to be regretted that this finest of all Samuel McIntire's designs should have been lost for all time.

A short block further and we reach Town House Square, the city's heart, at the crossing of Essex and Washington streets. Here took place the cutting, by John Endicott, of the red cross of St. George from the flag of England as an improper symbol in a Puritan commonwealth; here stood the old Town Pump, "A Rill" from which was written by Hawthorne; also, before 1676, the Watch House,

and at the present time upon the southeast corner stands the First Church upon the site of the original structure, but with several intervening buildings. There has therefore been a church upon this ground since 1635 or earlier.

In the grounds of the Essex Institute has been erected the frame of a building which was long supposed to be that of this church of 1635, but a very careful investigation disproved the fact and it is now believed to have been the frame of the first meeting-house of the Society of Friends, deeded to them in 1690 by Thomas Maule, the builder, and one of their Society.

Turning north up Washington Street to its terminus and then up Federal Street we see the

### Group of Three Court Houses

but looking backward to an earlier date than these it is known that in 1672 the first meeting-house was removed to make way for another building and in 1676 the timbers were used to construct a town, school, court and watch house about four rods to the west of its former site. Before it was completed it was moved thence to a point just east of the present Masonic Building on Washington Street, so that it faced directly down the street, where it stood until 1718, and it was in this building that the poor victims of the witchcraft delusion were tried, if the travesty of justice accorded them can be dignified by that term, in 1692. Nineteen were hung on Gallows Hill, at the westerly border of the city, most of them from decisions in this Court, but let us once more emphasize the fact, that, despite popular tradition, none were burned, although one, Giles Corey was pressed to death.





In 1718 a new Town and Court House was built just west of the present First Church which served through the Revolutionary War and until 1785. In this, in 1774, sat the last General Assembly of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, which on June 17th, in defiance of Governor Gage, chose delegates to the first Continental Congress.

In 1785 a new Court and Town House was built, from designs by McIntire, just beyond the mouth of the present railroad tunnel, to the east of the granite Court House, which was removed in 1839 to make way for the tunnel, and in the course of the next two or three years the present building was erected. In 1861 the brick building to the westward was built and here, in the office of the Clerk of Courts, are to be seen the testimony in the witchcraft trials, the death warrant of Bridget Bishop and some of the pins which the victims were accused of using to torture the afflicted ones.

In 1909 the splendid granite building of the Registry of Deeds and the Probate Court, still further to the west, was opened for use.

A block beyond the Courts, still following Federal Street, is the

### **Peirce-Nichols House**

the best existing example of McIntire's work which remains, to which entrance may be obtained upon Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, upon application to the Essex Institute which now owns the house, although it is still used as a residence by the two ladies whose home it has been for many years.

Returning a few rods to North Street and following it a block to the south, upon the corner of Essex Street stands the so-called

### **Witch House**

from a tradition that some of the preliminary examinations in the witchcraft trials were held in one of the rooms, Jonathan Corwin, one of the judges, being then its occupant. The house which was unfinished in 1675, was then reconstructed in much its present form, and it is much to be regretted that a modern shop has been built out from one corner.

Leaving here and continuing up Essex Street we pass the fine stone structure of the North Church, formerly in a wooden building on Lynde and North streets in 1772, but removed to the present building in 1835 and next door the attractive house and wonderful garden of the

### **Ropes Memorial**

The house was built in 1719 and remained in possession of the Ropes family from 1768 to the death of the Misses Ropes who by their wills established a trust under which the property was to be maintained with a special fund to provide for botanical lectures. The furnishings are as they were during the occupancy of the family and the interior may be visited upon certain days of the week.

Still keeping to Essex Street we pass upon the left the fine house built by Joseph Cabot in 1748, where later lived Supreme Court Justice William Crowninshield Endicott, Secretary of War under President Cleveland, and diagonally opposite a large brick building built in 1855 by Captain John Bertram and given by his heirs, in 1887, to the city as a Public Library. By its side stands the superb Bertram Elm, nineteen feet in circumference, and the largest in this region.

At the next corner, Flint Street, we turn left and almost at once again to the left, passing down Chestnut Street, lined on both sides with dignified houses dating for the most part to early in the nineteenth century. At Pickering Street we digress to the right for

one block, turning down Broad Street to pass the Pickering house, built in 1660 by John Pickering, but remodeled and the many gables added in 1841. This house has always remained in possession of the Pickering family.

### Hamilton Hall

At the next corner, turning into Cambridge Street, one block brings us to a good-sized brick building, which has been the scene of many social gaieties since it was built in 1805. Named in honor of Alexander Hamilton, the beautiful hall upon the second floor has been graced by the presence at dinners of Colonel Timothy Pickering, of Revolutionary fame, in 1808; of Commodore Bainbridge in 1813, and of Lafayette in 1824.

Here have been held for many years the Salem Assemblies at which it has been incumbent upon every belle of the town to appear if she would be considered as one of the exclusive set, and for some years the performances of a clever set of amateur actors were given here.

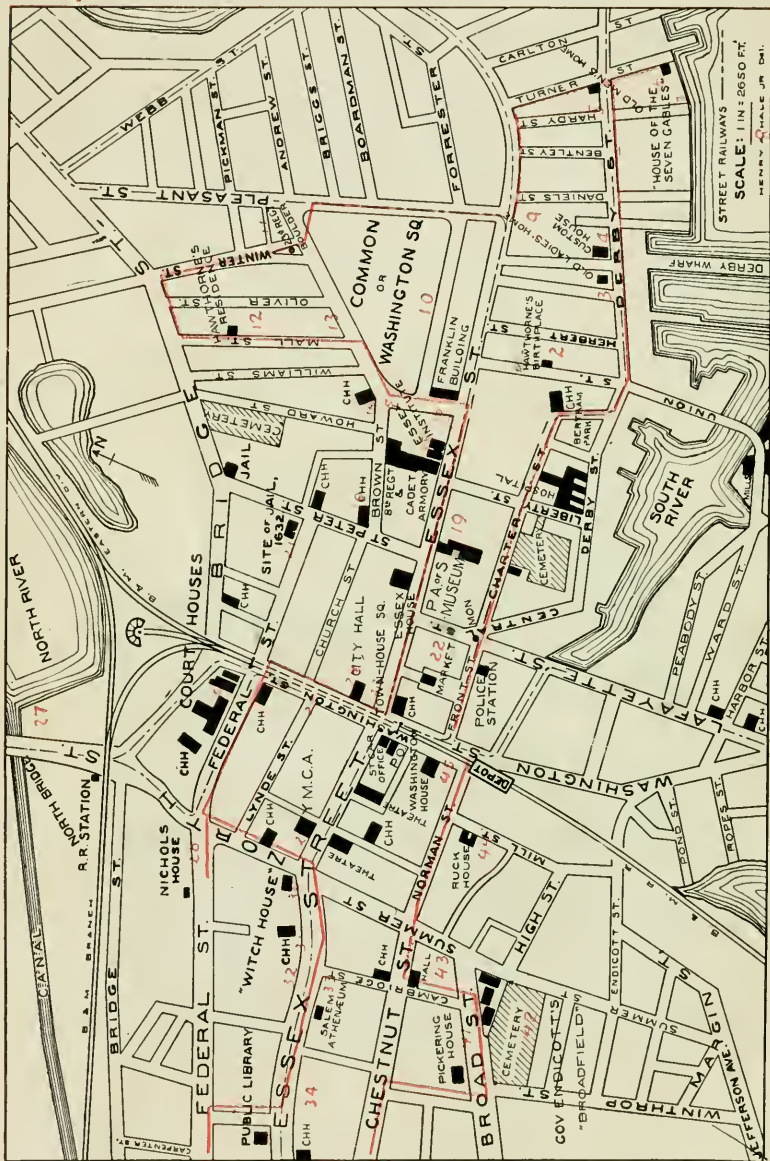
From here Chestnut Street leads directly into Norman Street, and thus back to the railway station.

The above by no means exhausts the points of interest, but does include the principal ones and affords a tour easily accomplished in a limited time.



THE MARKET HOUSE AND MARKET SQUARE





PUBLISHED BY THE ESSEX INSTITUTE, SALEM, MASS.







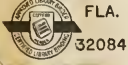






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